

QUEBEC BATTLEFIELDS

EARL GREY'S APPEAL

Mass Meeting at Russell Theatre at Ottawa, January 15, 1908

This great meeting, convened by the Canadian Club of Ottawa, rejoices my heart more than any other incident in my experience since I became Governor General. For what does it mean? It means that the Canadian clubs, which know no party narrower than the state, represent a latent national force, in every part of the Dominion, ready for action whenever occasion demands the performance of duty. I congratulate the officers and members of the Canadian Club of Ottawa on the spirited action they have taken, and thank them and all Canadian clubs, and especially the Canadian Club of Edmonton, for the most welcome assistance and support they have given, and are giving, in response to my appeal.

The present is an occasion on which no party, sectarian, or sectional narrowness can mar the harmony of our proceedings, or weaken the unity of our action. We are met here to consider what can be done to celebrate the approaching tercentenary of Quebec, in a manner worthy of Canada, and of the Empire.

It has been agreed, with an unanimity which appears to be not less intense than widespread, making itself felt in enthusiastic and sympathetic gusts from across the seas, that there can be no better way of doing honour to what may be roughly regarded as the 300th birthday of Canada, than by nationalizing the battlefields of Quebec. The immortal associations which cling round those battlefields are the precious inheritance of Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, New Zealanders, Australians, Cana-

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dians, and also Americans and Frenchmen. They contain enough, and more than enough, to feed and stimulate the national pride of all, whether they be of British or of French descent.

There is one aspect from which the battlefields of Quebec should be especially dear to you. It was on the battlefields of Quebec that French and British parentage gave birth to the Canadian nation. To-day the inhabitants of the Dominion are neither English nor French. They stand before the world, not as English or French, but as Canadians. It is from the inspiring standpoint of Canadian nationality that the proposal to celebrate the 300th birthday of Canada, by the nationalization of the famous battlefields of Quebec, should win the enthusiastic support of every patriotic Canadian.

If we regard the question sectionally, I would ask, where is the well-informed Briton to be found, no matter in what part of the Empire he may reside, who has not a personal interest in the ground where the corner-stone of Greater Britain was laid? I might say the same of every well-informed American. The first chapter of the history of the United States describes how the Plains of Abraham became the parchment on which in 1775 the Declaration of Independence was inscribed.

If the battle of the Plains decided the fate of North America, it is equally certain that the battle of Ste. Foye won for the French Canadians for all time the full and absolute right to the secured enjoyment of their language, their religion and their laws, under conditions such as do not exist in equal degree in any portion of the earth outside the Empire of the British Crown.

The nationalization of the battlefields is thus a consecration of those principles which have enabled the British crown to win the heartfelt loyalty of all its subjects and which have made the British Empire the most potent force for the spread of freedom that the world has ever seen.

Gentlemen, it is my hope that the result of this meeting may be the creation of an organization which will bring before every Briton the opportunity of associating himself with the battlefields

of Quebec, through the medium of a small contribution to the Champlain Tercentenary and Quebec Battlefields fund.

You are aware that I have proposed that a statue of Peace should be erected at the extreme edge of the Citadel rock of Quebec, where it may be the first object visible to incoming vessels on rounding the point of the Isle of Orleans. I hope that His Majesty's Canadian government may take the necessary steps to secure that this proposed statue shall be in every sense worthy of its great position, of Canada, and of the Crown. The statue of Peace must not be banal or vulgar, with flowing and windy draperies. It must be noble, calm, majestic, reposeful—the arms outstretched forward, with the palms slightly downward as though blessing the incoming ships, and the eyes lovingly bent on the people below. On the base of the statue can be represented different phases of Canadian life.

Gentlemen, I hope every Canadian boy will be taught what a privilege it is to be able, by the payment of a few cents, to contribute his help to the nationalization of ground which gave to the French Canadians good government and a place within the Empire, and to the British half a continent on this side of the Atlantic and an Empire of self-governing Dominions.

This is a privilege which does not often come within the reach of any generation, and my hope is that every public-spirited Briton, wherever he may reside, may not be slow to avail himself of his opportunity.

The EDITH and LORNE PIERCE
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